1/7/72

Dear Gary,

This letteris based on no more than coincidence, therefore the suspicion it relays may be quite unfair. That is not my intention. But I will be telling you what I cannot avoid in the hope that you can find some way of getting to the bottom of what I could not, without unfairness, tell everyone to whom I wrote the more general note yesterday.

You know of my concern about Wecht in particular getting to see the pictures and X-rays. I felt and said we could not prevent the government's use of a sycophant to say what it wanted, but that the greatest disaster would be for one of his stature to see this stuff and come out and say it disputed the WR. If I didn't give you the reasons, I will when you are here. I shared this fear with Ned.

My information is painfully specific, much more so that yesterday's letter shows. The one man to whom access has been granted is Lattimore. If you do not recall his writing, that also you can see when you are here. And of all the things to which he could request access, he has asked for the brace and the Ace bandage. The import is obvious: he wants to be able to say the only reason the Prewident didn't fall forward is because the brace prevented it. My source is the reporter to whom the government has leaked all of this. Lattimore has apparently told him that the bandage was laced over the brace to make him more rigid, bending impossible. Fortunately, this reporter couldn't find the references to the Ace bandage and use this as his reason to call me. I explained the reality to him as I can because I also have and have used such a brace since 1939.

If Lattimore is the only one granted this undescribed access, the two items above being all enumerated, Wecht, Nichols and someone from Michigan have also applied and with them the decision has not been made. The obvious ploy is for it to be said that Lattimore is of undoubted competence, independence, and that he is given access is enough. And he'll come out with another whitewash. This is the best we can hope for, and to that I have already, to the degree I can, addressed myself with the choice of the leak and a few others well placed. I'll go further as soon as I can, time and money being the immediate limitations.

What I have to ask myself about is the timing. I again have to hasten because Lil will have to work tonight until after the outgoing mail, so I want to mail this when I take her in this a.m. The timing coincides with several things, one being Ned's long-delayed return of my materials, for which I had witten so often without response and which came expensively to be rapidly, without the assurances I had asked, that he had shown it to nobody. He has a personal involvement in this and a strong view the immaturity of which he does not recognize. If you ask him right out did he do this he'll be defensive at best. I suggest a different approach. Tell him only that you have heard from me and that I have heard access is being granted despite a contrary strong position by Marshall three months ago (which is true). If you say I am worried about the consequences, suggesting it is in terms of an adverse impact on POST MORTEM rather than the consequences I really fear, it is possible he will say more, if there is more to say. I think he really wants to do something, show what he can do, etc., and did not intend the evil that now impends. He did tell me of connections with those who could have brought this off. At least one he wanted to speak to, who is parti pris and can be seriously hurt by the truth, one of the reasons I was opposed to him being spoken to. He was close enough to this one at least.

The timing is remarkable. It was not done when it could have been. It was done at the time Ned finally did what he should have done in October (without the assurances his own integrity as well as my proper requests required), at a time when Congress was not in session, so that it would not be easy to find some heft to apply there, and for the return of the Congress, when some sounding off might be arranged if not anticipated. The one to whom I spoke is a Senator who is also a friend of Marshall's. Marshall then told him that he would grant access to nobody. He also made this very, very clear at the Princeton meeting on the FBI (which will be the major beneficiary of this ploy).

We can discuss this more when you are here, but if you can find any way of learning whether Ned did do this (he could have reached Marshall easily) or some reasonable assurance that he did not it would be of potential value. Meanwhile, what it now looks like is that the only way we can offset this in any solid way if by making PM available, with all its contents, and that is now impossible for one in my financial condition. So all I can do is continue to try and offset as much as I can, a hell of a way to spend time at best. HH